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Comic Symmetry in Jane Austen's *Emma*

'If any work belong unequivocally to any genre," Laurence Lerner remarks, "*Emma* is a comedy."[1] Lerner's insight suggests that it might be profitable to ask what makes the novel seem such a classic comedy. To approach *Emma* as a comedy is to think of it, not in the usual context of nineteenth-century fiction, but rather in conjunction with *Much Ado About Nothing, The Way of the World, Tom Jones.* In such comedies, the conflicts and characters are simple and fixed: what interests us is the intricate design, the complex and surprising pattern, into which these elements fall. In fact, the simple constituents are necessary for the intricate design of the whole. Suppose, for instance, that we allow ourselves to doubt Emma's conviction that Mr. Elton's motives in courting her were merely greed and vanity—after all, that conviction is comforting, since it removes any doubt or remorse she might feel about her abrupt dismissal of her first suitor. But the gain in psychological irony, in inner complexity, would slow and blur another set of complex ironies, those emerging from the comic action itself.

Reginald Farrer described the way this comic design works some fifty years ago: "Only when the story has been thoroughly assimilated can the infinite delights and subleties of its workmanship begin to be appreciated, as you realize the manifold complexity of the book's web, and find that every sentence, almost every epithet, has its definite reference to equally unemphasized points before and after in the development of the plot."[2] Farrer's remark suggests that an alert reader of the novel—even an alert first reader—will constantly be thinking backward and forward from the dramatic present as he reads: we are kept from immersing ourselves in the moment by becoming aware of the pattern it contains. Farrer also points out that the comic pattern, if precise, is also "unemphasized"—implicit, sly, for us to find.

What is essentially comic in *Emma,* then, lies in its design. But since that design is presented ironically, an accurate account of it can be

reached only after a great deal of observation and reflection. In fact, the novel is so subtly symmetrical, so mined with interconnected details, that criticism has, I think, yet to define its structure adequately. An instance of sly patterning which has not been noticed by Jane Austen's critics will illustrate the point.

When we, along with Emma, first meet Harriet Smith in chapter iii, we are told of Harriet, "She was a very pretty girl, and her beauty happened to be of a sort which Emma particularly admired. She was short, plump and fair, with a fine bloom, blue eyes, light hair, regular features, and a look of great sweetness."[3] This seems innocuous enough, but we learn from Mrs. Weston's praise of Emma in chapter v that Emma herself is tall and elegant, with hazel eyes (28). Emma particularly likes Harriet's style of appearance, just as she likes Harriet's style of personality, because it poses no threat to Emma's own—in fact, it forms a perfect foil for Emma's charms. Furthermore, when Emma paints Harriet's portrait in chapter vi, we find that she makes Harriet appear taller and more elegant than she actually is. Emma creates an image of Harriet much more like Emma herself than Harriet really is. The symbolism here not only presents Emma as the artist moulding nature into new and more pleasing shapes, as several critics have pointed out; even more precisely, the portrait epitomizes what Emma does to Harriet in general: she transforms Harriet's actual self into a monstrous new identity fashioned in the image of Emma herself. And in this respect, as in so many others, the outing to Box Hill recapitulates the action of the novel. There, Frank Churchill playfully commissions Emma to produce a wife for him when he returns from abroad: "Find somebody for me. I am in no hurry. Adopt her, educate her." Emma, thinking of Harriet, coquettishly replies, "And make her like myself" (292).[4] And so it is appropriate that, like a comic Frankenstein's monster, Harriet eventually turns unwittingly on her maker, forcing Emma to realize what she has created.

My point is that each of these scenes, beginning with Emma's particular admiration of Harriet's sort of beauty, invites us to see beyond the dramatic moment to the pattern it contains. This pattern, being "unemphasized," is not fixed. We may also note, for instance, that Jane Fairfax is tall and elegant in appearance, like Emma and unlike Harriet. Joseph Wiesenfarth shrewdly juxtaposes Emma's flattering portrait of Harriet with Robert Martin's having taken the exact measure of Harriet's height[5]—a measurement which, but for Emma, would have brought Harriet and the Martins together again.

Much of the most helpful criticism of the novel, in fact, consists of remarking subtle instances of comic symmetry. But, as Farrer suggests, we grasp more than tissues of related words and incidents: through the "manifold complexity" we sense "the book's web," a single comic structure. This deeper, ironic structure is much harder to define. I suggest that Jane Austen's web consists of three main threads, and that all the local symmetries lead to and from these threads in networks which get ever finer as we pursue them. These three lines of action are: the hidden love of Emma and Mr. Knightley for each other; the counterpointing of that secret love with the secret engagement of Frank Churchill and Jane Fairfax; the use of the other characters to embody aspects of Emma herself. This attempt to chart the novel's structure will also, I hope, throw some light on the methods and attitudes of comedy itself.

II

Though every one who likes the novel at all must smile at Emma's unrecognized love for Mr. Knightley, surprisingly little is said about it by critics of the novel. Howard S. Babb, however, has some suggestive remarks; discussing the issue of Emma's snobbishness, he says, "The cause of her compulsive disengagement is her inability to recognize and admit what she feels for Mr. Knightley . . . It is the novel's major irony that an Emma so frequently wrapped up in herself, and one who cultivates detachment, should so radically misconceive her real attachment."[6] We can take Babb's point one step further and say that Emma's unrecognized love is the cause of her foolish mistakes over Harriet Smith and Mr. Elton, over Mr. Dixon and Jane Fairfax, and so on: these mistakings provide a screen of romantic fantasies which disguise her real interest in love from herself. Emma, after all, is preoccupied with affairs of the heart—affairs of other people's hearts, that is; she can see clearly and act decisively when love is not involved.

In Emma's case, then, the course of true love runs in two channels. One, at the visible level, contains Emma's embarrassing errors as an amatory busybody; the other, underground channel, which only surfaces at the novel's climax, contains her real feelings toward Mr. Knightley, which become clearer and clearer to us (if not to her) as the action advances. If the hidden stream is the source of the visible one, the latter provides a chart throughout to the depths concealed within the heroine.

The surface action of the novel falls into two successive and similar patterns of comic nemesis. Volume I is a self-enclosed prelude, or image

in little, for the main action, which occupies Volumes II and III. Though the prelude has a cast of only three and a single broad irony, while the main action is much more varied and convoluted, the pattern is the same in each case: Emma's blunders as the Highbury Cupid become more and more obvious to all but her, until finally circumstances, rebelling against her guiding hand, slap her rudely in the face and wake her up. The comic symmetry is very precise here: just as in Volume I she discovers, to her dismay, that she and Mr. Elton have both been using Harriet Smith as a pawn to advance Mr. Elton's charade of a courtship, so in Volumes II and III she finds Frank Churchill and Jane Fairfax have been using her as their "blind" (335); like Harriet before, she must learn that another woman has been secretly preferred to her. At the surface level, then, the novel has a two-part, beguiler-beguiled structure: Emma finds herself living out a comic form of the Golden Rule. So much is worth spelling out, even if almost every reader must enjoy seeing Emma get hers (as we say), because most recent critics have followed Joseph M. Duffy, who argues that the novel falls into three stages: the Emma-Elton-Harriet fiasco; "the Emma-Frank Churchill-Jane Fairfax illusion and masquerade" (chapters xviii through xlvi (i.e., through III, x)); the relationship between Emma and Mr. Knightley (chapters xlvii through lxv (i.e., III, xi to xix)).[7]

We can, though, see the two main comic situations—the two successive romantic triangles—as parallel surface actions, displacements caused by and directing us to the real plot, which lies in Emma's relationship with Mr. Knightley. Unbeknownst to herself, Emma loves him from the start. After learning that Frank and Jane are secretly engaged, after being shocked by Harriet's hopes into realizing that "Mr. Knightley must marry no one but herself!" (320), Emma makes the most surprising discovery of all: "there never had been a time" when she did not love him (324). She would have been able to understand herself at any point, she thinks, if only it had occurred to her "to institute the comparison" between him and the man she thought she loved, Frank Churchill. We, however, see a great deal more clearly into Emma's heart than she does herself: the cleverly-scattered clues to her real feelings become more and more insistent. This rising curve of ironic disclosure forms the real plot of the novel; certainly, Jane Austen artfully frames the self-enclosed action of Volume I within three increasingly-heated debates between Emma and Mr. Knightley, one at the beginning, one at the middle, and one at the end of the volume. This ironic curve is supported by an echoing, if subordinate, curve of clues about the real nature of Mr. Knightley's concern for Emma.

Why wouldn't Emma admit her love from the start? Why *didn't* it occur to her to institute the comparison? For one thing, like many heroes and heroines of comedy, she does not want to give up her independent selfhood. She tells Harriet in chapter x, "Never could I expect to be so truly beloved and important, so always first and always right in any man's eyes as I am in my father's" (65). Certainly, Mr. Woodhouse is unlikely ever to be outbid in this sort of affection. But, as with, say, Shakespeare's Beatrice and Benedick, events will not so much conquer as correct Emma's selfhood; Emma not only will shed her barren assumptions about love and her own emotional needs, she will find herself, to her surprise, happy to do so. Emma also fears love because she considers it to be blind. Emma is exquisitely self-contained: the idea of being out of control, of losing her will in the grip of passion, disturbs her. This is why she tells Harriet, in the same scene, that her attachment to her nephews and nieces "suits my ideas of comfort better than what is warmer and blinder" (66). Similarly, after Harriet has confessed her hopes of Mr. Knightley to Emma, Emma thinks that she can have no hopes of her own: "*She* could not. She could not flatter herself with any idea of blindness in his attachment to *her*. She had received a very recent proof of its impartiality" (326). Emma is thinking of his stern rebuke of her treatment of Miss Bates; ironically, of course, that rebuke proves, rather than disproves, his real love for her.

The most important aspect of Emma's fear of love—and one she cannot formulate—is her fear of being hurt. Emma is afraid of being undervalued, of being taken as a fluttery, dependent creature, a female, rather than a person of intelligence and dignity of her own. Listen to her challenging Mr. Knightley in their debate over breathless, brainless Harriet Smith: " 'To be sure,' she cried playfully, 'I know *that* is the feeling of you all. I know that such a girl as Harriet is exactly what every man delights in—what at once bewitches his sense and satisfies his judgment. Oh! Harriet may pick and choose. Were you, yourself, ever to marry, she is the very woman for you' " (48). Without realising it, she is asking Mr. Knightley to declare that he would marry someone like herself,and not a Harriet, but she must content herself with his vigorous generalization, "Men of sense, whatever you may say, do not want silly wives" (48). In her opinionated confusion, Emma thinks of men and woman as two completely different species, each having its own sphere, its own special kind of knowledge, its own code of action. Like those who make up personality profile tests, Emma assumes men are primarily interested in objects and abstract ideas, while woman have expertise in

emotional relationships. After her argument with Mr. Knightley about the right man for Harriet, Emma "still thought herself a better judge of such a point of female right and refinement than he could be" (49).

Emma will discover that men and women have much more in common than she thinks, that they can be friends rather than merely symbiotic opposites. In fact, the action of the novel can be seen as Emma's search for, and triumphant discovery of, a true friend. The impulse that sets the action in motion is Emma's loss of Miss Taylor: in Emma's eyes, at least. "they had been living together as friend and friend very mutually attached" (1). Emma tries to fill Miss Taylor's place with Harriet Smith, though Mr. Knightley tells Emma, in words which ring in her mind (106, 315), "You have been no friend to Harriet Smith, Emma" (47). Emma refuses to consider Jane Fairfax for the vacancy, though "birth, abilities, and education" mark Jane out for it (330), and flirts with the possibility of taking on Frank Churchill as her intimate friend—only to find that her real friend from the start has been Mr. Knightley. It is as a friend that he addresses Emma. He warns her that there may be some understanding between Frank Churchill and Jane Fairfax "as a friend—an anxious friend" (273); he ends his stern remarks to her over Miss Bates with, "I will tell you truths while I can, satisfied with proving myself your friend by very faithful counsel" (294). And when he is about to reveal his own feelings to Emma, she at first refuses to hear what she thinks will be a confession of infatuation with Harriet; but, after a moment of sympathy and self-discipline, she determines to hear him out "as a friend." Mr. Knightley at first pauses—"Emma, that I fear is a word—No, I have no wish"—but then decides to give the word a special meaning: "Emma, I accept your offer—extraordinary as it may seem, I accept it and refer myself to you as a friend. —Tell me, then, have I no chance of ever succeeding?" (337). Emma has shown herself finally worthy of receiving his proposal that he be her friend for life.[8]

The real plot of the novel, then, lies beneath the complicated surface events. This notion helps explain the response of one group of readers. Many in its original audience, like many undergraduates today, found the novel complicated but trivial, lacking in a unified, dramatic, and significant plot. John Henry Newman, for instance, said in 1837: "Everything Miss Austen writes is clever, but I desiderate something. There is a want of *body* to the story, the action is frittered away in over-little things."[9] This response, free of canonical, sophisticated sightlines, points to something real in the novel. There *is* a want of body to the story, since the romantic plots that Emma imposes on the world around

her lack substance; she is herself in danger of frittering away her life in over-little things. But underneath the over-little things is a single large one, their cause and successor: her response to Mr. Knightley.

III

If Emma is merely an instrument in Frank Churchill's schemes, Jane Austen gives her heroine some recompense by making Frank's plot merely a means of bringing Emma's story to its fruition. As in many traditional comedies, the love story at the work's centre is interwoven with the trials of another pair of lovers, Frank Churchill and Jane Fairfax. The action is neatly contrived, so that the resolution of the Frank-Jane plot brings about, by chain reaction, the resolution of the central plot; further, in the manner of comedy, the two plots are presented in intricate counterpoint to bring out the difference between the two matches, to let each illuminate the other. Both plots turn upon a secret love, but one is secret by conscious deception, the other by unconscious self-deception. One love story, that of Frank and Jane, is resolved wholly by chance, by Mrs. Churchill's completely unexpected and very timely death; the other match is achieved by choice, by change, by mutual self-direction.[10]

This counterpoint reaches a wonderful subtlety in the Box Hill episode. Box Hill is the turning point for both love affairs, the occasion for a quarrel which pulls each pair of lovers apart only to bring them back together all the more intimately and for good. Frank's letter of explanation allows us to understand how crucial Box Hill is for Frank and Jane. Frank, piqued at Jane's unwillingness to walk home with him from Donwell Abbey the day before, flirts with Emma in order to taunt Jane, and then uses the departure of the Eltons as a screen for delivering a private insult: women can't be known at Bath, or any public place, he says, but only when you see them in their own homes, among their own set (292). Jane, wounded, answers with veiled bitterness: "It can only be weak, irresolute characters (whose happiness must always be at the mercy of chance) who will suffer an unfortunate acquaintance to be an inconvenience, an oppression for ever" (292). Frank, highly indignant, leaves Highbury that very afternoon without saying farewell to Jane; that evening, she accepts Mrs. Elton's eagerly-offered position with Mrs. Smalridge and writes to Frank breaking off the engagement. Chance, however, intervenes; Frank's aunt dies and he is not forced to choose between the two ladies who rule his life. Jane's ultimatum, though, does

make it advisable that he go directly to his uncle and ask for his permission to marry Jane; now Mrs. Churchill is no more, that permission is quickly granted.

My point is this: we can never be sure Frank Churchill would have been willing to give up his fortune for Jane. He is relieved of the choice. Why, after all, did he insist on keeping their engagement secret? In his letter of explanation, he writes, "But you will be ready to say, what was your hope in doing this?—What did you look forward to? —To any thing, every thing—to time, chance, circumstance, slow effects, sudden bursts, perseverance and weariness, health and sickness" (343). In more simple terms, he was waiting for his aunt to die—or, failing that, to go through some unpredictable alteration. In either case, Frank could marry Jane *and* retain all his aunt's money and status. The force he relies on does reward him in the end: chance allows him to remain a spoiled child, free of painful choices. He closes his letter by saying that Emma had been right in calling him "the child of good fortune" (348).[11]

Emma begins as another Frank, another pampered only child in a rich home. But she has a different, more substantial kind of good fortune: she is allowed to choose, to repudiate, to grow, to grow up. Emma and Mr. Knightley triumph, not by opportunism, but by stern moral choices. Emma's thoughtless insult to Miss Bates at Box Hill corresponds exactly to Frank's sneer at Jane's domestic circle; Mr. Knightley's rebuke, as difficult for him to make as it is for her to receive, is parallel to Jane's ironic reproof of Frank as weak and irresolute, so wounding to his pride. But Mr. Knightley's criticism is open, not veiled; unlike Frank, Emma has both the courage and the desire to accept the truth. Emma is so hurt at losing Mr. Knightley's good opinion, and at seeming inadvertently to scorn his advice, that, feeling pain of a sort she has never known before, she genuinely wants to change, and does. As a result, when Mr. Knightley comes calling, Emma brings on his proposal, as she could not have before, by her quiet self-sacrifice. The happy coming together of Emma and Mr. Knightley may lack the dramatic éclat, the spectacular good fortune, of the other couple, but it has the dignity and integrity of something they have made themselves. Mr. Knightley's comment after reading Frank's letter has an uncomplacent precision: "My Emma, does not every thing serve to prove more and more the beauty of truth and sincerity in all our dealings with each other?" (350).

This counterpointing of Frank and Emma becomes explicit in their final meeting. Emma says that she is certain that Frank must have en-

joyed deceiving everyone in Highbury, because she knows that she herself would have found great amusement in doing so. "I think there is a little likeness between us," she says drily, to which he bows acknowledgement. Emma adds that, at the least, she and Frank have the same destiny—"the destiny which bids fair to connect us with characters so much superior to our own" (376). But this same scene shows that the likeness only brings out the unlikeness between Emma, who raises herself to her husband's moral level, and Frank, who brings his wife down to his. In this final view of Frank, he ecstatically admires the complexion, hair, and eyes of his bride-to-be, "whispering seriously" to Emma the news that "my uncle means to give her all my aunt's jewels. They are to be new set. Will it not be beautiful in her dark hair?" (377). Frank ends up with both the aunt's jewels and the beautiful hair, though, as Jane's embarrassed reproach a few minutes later suggests, he does so at the price of remaining the thoughtless boy he has always been. Emma returns home even happier in her happiness with Mr. Knightley for "the animated contemplation of his worth which this comparison produced" (378). She, not Frank, is the lucky one.

IV

The two symmetrical networks I have defined emerge from, and control, the twists and turns of the plot. But our comic detachment also forces on our notice a broader and more static kind of design, that created by character contrasts. Such unchanging patterns are a feature of traditional comedy; throughout *Tom Jones*, for instance, the hero and heroine are poised between Mr. Allworthy's theoretical benevolence and Squire Western's animal vigour. Such broad oppositions chart the perfect happiness toward which the comic action moves, and which it finally attains; that happiness is imaged as a midpoint combining the excellence of one-sided extremes. Emma and Mr. Knightley, for instance, marry out of motives which fall between, and combine, the self-aware calculation of the Eltons and the romantic feeling which unites Frank and Jane.

These comic oppositions have an important consequence: Emma comes to exist, not only in her own self, but as she is reflected and embodied in the characters around her. This extroversion of psychological conflict frequently occurs in sophisticated comedy: when Tom Jones wins his Sophia, when Millamant accepts her Mirabell, inward changes are delicately conveyed. Had these changes been directly presented, we

would lose our comic distance,and so our comic perspective; in this sense, my opening assertion that comic characters are simple and fixed should be qualified. In *Emma*, certainly, the heroine has a many-faceted, self-divided personality, since the major characters surrounding her persistently live a double life—they are both themselves and aspects of Emma. Mr. Woodhouse, for instance, embodies one extreme within the unregenerate Emma. He is utterly self-absorbed, so that all events must seem to revolve around his preferences; he resists change or effort of any kind; he is utterly unable to distinguish between his own wishes and what actually is the case.[12]

This notion of alter egos gives a new dimension to the first chapter of the novel. Emma falls into self-pitying loneliness the evening after "poor Miss Taylor" marries Mr. Weston, but she rallies herself to combat the same feelings in her father. When Mr. Knightley calls, though, Emma takes the plaintive pose again, but now her own rational position is uncompromisingly urged upon her by Mr. Knightley: Emma "cannot allow herself to feel so much pain as pleasure. Every friend of Miss Taylor's must be glad to have her so happily married" (6).

The chapter suggests that Emma is suspended between a Knightley self and a Woodhouse one. Mr. Knightley, in fact, functions as Emma's deepest or true self throughout the novel. For instance, Emma expresses a stern view of Frank Churchill's procrastinations to Mrs. Weston, but, a few pages later, she perversely claims more sympathy for Frank than she actually feels; she thus finds herself in the ironic position of "making use of Mrs. Weston's arguments against herself," while Mr. Knightley expresses "her real opinion" (112). Jane Austen tells us that Emma can always find excuses to avoid calling on Miss Bates and her mother, though "she had many a hint from Mr. Knightley, and some from her own heart, as to the deficiency" (117). Mr. Knightley embodies, then, Emma's own heart and conscience: this is what makes his rebuke on the subject of Miss Bates so painful.[13] The union of Emma and Mr. Knightley is thus, in part, a psychic one: Emma becomes reunited with a part of herself she had renounced. This is why Mr. Knightley must wait for Emma to educate herself; she can only come to him when she has come to herself.

All this helps explain the importance of Mr. Knightley's polar opposite within Emma, Mrs. Elton. By leading Mr. Elton on and then rejecting him, Emma has summoned from the depths of Bristol a substitute for herself who embodies, in garish, unmitigated form, all her own complacent, vain, mean, and domineering qualities. The corres-

pondences between Emma and Mrs. Elton are precise and ingenious; many of them have been remarked by the critics, but the function of this pairing in the larger design is much less clear.[14] Mrs. Elton's appearance in Highbury more than halfway through the novel is actually part of Emma's genuine good fortune, a gift to her from comic providence. For now Emma can make a good choice between her good and her bad angels, between her ideal and her selfish selves. The back-to-back excursions to Donwell Abbey and Box Hill, the only occasions in the novel when we leave Highbury, dramatize this opposition: Mr. Knightley refuses Mrs. Elton's offer to organize the first expedition and runs it in his own satisfyingly unpretentious way; the Box Hill trip on the following day is, from the start, Mrs. Elton's party, though Emma comes home from it under Mr. Knightley's influence, having once and for all repented of her insensitive Mrs. Elton self.

This comic conflict between the Knightley and the Elton in Emma is enacted and defined at the Crown Inn ball. Mrs. Elton, it seems clear, has instigated her husband to spurn Harriet publicly (repeating thereby his earlier spurning of Harriet), but Mr. Knightley ruins her scheme with his quick generosity, just as he will later rescue Harriet from the fate Emma's schemes seem to have made inevitable. And, after this comic psychodrama, when Emma confesses the reason for the Eltons' spite, Mr. Knightley replies:

> "I shall not scold you. I leave you to your own reflections."
> "Can you trust me with such flatterers? —Does my vain spirit ever tell me I am wrong?"
> "Not your vain spirit, but your serious spirit. —If one leads you wrong, I am sure the other tells you of it." (258)

If Mrs. Elton is Emma's vain spirit, there is good reason for the withering dismissal of her in the final paragraph. We learn there that Mrs. Elton knows of Emma's marriage only "from particulars detailed by her husband"; she is not among "the small band of true friends who witnessed the ceremony" because she embodies a part of Emma herself which has been exorcised, banished to a realm of white satin and staring Selinas.

This extroversion of Emma's conflicts is a familiar device in sophisticated comedy. It is accompanied, however, by a striking innovation; the usual social conflicts of comedy are introverted or internalized. According to theorists such as Suzanne Langer and Northrop Frye, traditional comedy presents the rhythm of life overcoming obstacles and

renewing itself; this pattern of upset and regained equilibrium underlies the typical comic plot, in which young lovers overthrow and revitalize a society which obstructs natural energies. In *Emma*, the obstructing society is within Emma herself: it is she who frustrates nature's plans for marriage and erects insuperable barriers between social classes. Any renewal of the novel's society will be the result of a change within Emma herself; Mrs. Weston reminds Mr. Knightley (and us) at the outset that Emma, accountable to nobody but her father, can not be stopped from indulging any of her projects "so long as it is a source of pleasure to herself" (29).

But if Emma contains the obstructing society within herself, she also contains the young lover. She is Millamant as well as Lady Wishfort, Good Heavens Gwendolyn as well as Lady Bracknell. Something within Emma makes Mr. Knightley more important to her than anything else. This ability to respond to him, without her knowledge and against her will, is at the heart of the novel's comic perspective: Emma's desire to be herself, her desire for Mr. Knightley, and her desire to be good all, finally, coincide. Harmony, not sacrifice or division, reigns. In the same way, we soon grasp that Mr. Knightley's concern for principle and for Emma's moral state coincide with his affection for her: to him, she is "faultless in spite of all her faults" (340). Emma's response, in spite of herself, to Mr. Knightley is what enables her to keep our sympathy throughout; it is also what makes her second awakening, unlike that at the end of Book I, final and convincing. Emma forsakes her fanciful schemes, and can see the vain motives which prompted them, only when she discovers the deepest "source of pleasure to herself" is to be in the real world with the man she respects and loves.

"The perfect happiness of the union", the novel's final words, thus describe a personal integration as well as a wedding. Interestingly enough, it is Miss Bates who defines most precisely the connection between psychological and social union; she says during one of her monologues, as if by accident, "It is such a happiness when good people get together—and they always do" (134).

NOTES

1. *The Truthtellers: Jane Austen, George Eliot, D.H. Lawrence* (New York: Shocken, 1967), p. 96.
2. "Jane Austen," cited here from *Emma: A Selection of Critical Essays*, ed. David Lodge (London: Macmillan, 1968), p. 65. Farrer's essay first appeared in *Quarterly Review*, 228 (July, 1917), 1-30, and is frequently reprinted.

3. *Emma* (Cambridge, Mass.; Houghton, Mifflin, 1957), p. 15. Subsequent references to this convenient edition are included within my text.
4. Darrel Mansell in *The Novels of Jane Austen: An Interpretation* (London: Macmillan, 1973), p. 152, links this remark to Emma's portrait of Harriet, though in somewhat different terms. For acute commentary on Box Hill as microcosm, see Mansell, pp. 166-70, Stuart M. Tave in *Some Words of Jane Austen* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1973), pp. 240-46, and Richard Poirier, "Transatlantic Configurations: Mark Twain and Jane Austen," in *A World Elsewhere: The Place of Style in American Literature* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1966), pp. 144-207.
5. *The Errand of Form: An Essay of Jane Austen's Art* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1967), p. 129.
6. *Jane Austen's Novels: The Fabric of Dialogue* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1962), p. 180.
7. "*Emma:* The Awakening from Innocence," *ELH*, 21 (1954), 39-54. For instance, of the critics cited above, Mansell, Wiesenfarth, and Babb all state that the book has a three-part structure.
8. Surprisingly, this patterned play upon the word, "friend," has escaped notice. J.F. Burrows is an exception, but he thinks Mr. Knightley's recurring use of the term is meant ironically: Mr. Knightley considers himself to be acting as Emma's friend, but we know differently (*Jane Austen's 'Emma'* (Sydney: Sydney University Press, 1968), p. 107).
9. Newman's comment occurs in a letter reprinted in *Jane Austen: The Critical Heritage*, ed. B.C. Southam (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1968), p. 117.
10. I am pursuing here a point made by W.J. Harvey: "The world of *Emma* is binary. Around the visible star, Emma herself, circles an invisible planet whose presence and orbit we can gauge only by measuring the perturbations in the world we see. . . . The written novel contains its unwritten twin whose shape is known only by the shadow it casts" (Lodge, p. 239). Harvey's splendid essay, "The Plot of *Emma*," first appeared in *Essays in Criticism*, 17 (1967), 48-63.
11. This uncharitable view of Frank, implicit in Mr. Knightley's comments upon his letter, is becoming more evident to the novel's readers. See, for instance, Harvey (p. 240), Tave *passim*, Douglas Bush (in *Jane Austen* (New York: Collier, 1975), p. 165), and Alastair M. Duckworth (in *The Improvement of the Estate: A Study of Jane Austen's Novels* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1971), p. 178).
12. That other major characters embody aspects of Emma herself has been noted by some recent critics; Wiesenfarth, for instance, says of Mr. Woodhouse that he "represents the danger of detachment from reality by way of egoism that she (Emma) is liable to" (p. 114). What I am trying to define here is the function of such correspondences in the comic structure.
13. A.Walton Litz says of the rebuke, "It awakens part of herself, and comes as the voice of her own conscience" (*Jane Austen: A Study of Her Artistic Development* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1965), p. 141).
14. Some illuminating comparisons between the two ladies are drawn by Mansell (pp. 156-60), Lerner (pp. 100-01), Kenneth L. Moler (*Jane Austen's Art of Allusion* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1968), p. 177), and Mark Schorer ("The Humiliation of Emma Woodhouse," Lodge, pp. 180-81.